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SUBJECT: DARFUR - EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ASSESSMENT  
PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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Summary  
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¶1. Preliminary results of the third Darfur Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (EFSNA) conducted in September 2006 show child malnutrition rates holding steady and mortality rates decreasing for three consecutive years. Stability and improvement were attributed to a combined effort of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and donors to provide life-sustaining services despite relentless security and environmental challenges. In South and West Darfur, most of the population assessed comprised displaced persons living in camps, while in North Darfur the vast majority was rural residents. The assessment's results emphasized the need for continued and strengthened support to maintain the gains made during the past two years and unhindered access to reach affected communities. End summary.

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Third Annual EFSNA  
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¶2. EFSNA is an annual survey that has assessed nutrition and food security in all three Darfur states since 2004. This year's survey was conducted during September 2006 and included the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN World Food Program (WFP), UN World Health Organization (WHO), and Government of National Unity (GNU) with technical support from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The main challenge to the study was the ongoing volatile security situation, which prevented access to some locations. The UN emphasized that the continued flow of humanitarian assistance is severely threatened due to ongoing insecurity.

¶3. The survey's preliminary findings show an overall stabilization in children's nutrition status, a decrease in mortality rates, and a slight improvement in food security of the 3.7 million conflict-affected persons receiving assistance in Darfur - both in camps for the internally displaced (IDPs) and in rural communities. In South and West Darfur, most of the population assessed was displaced persons living in camps, while in North Darfur the vast majority was rural residents.

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Nutrition and Health  
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¶4. All indicators of child health improved in 2006 compared to 2005 and, for a third consecutive year, mortality rates were below the emergency threshold in all three Darfur states. Although children aged between 6 and 29 months were more malnourished and at risk than children aged 30 to 59 months, malnutrition rates have generally stabilized. An increase in the rate of global acute malnutrition (GAM) in children 6 to 59 months of age from 11.9 percent in 2005 to 13.1 percent in 2006 is statistically not significant and remained below the emergency threshold and significantly below the 2004 rate of 21.8 percent. However, in North Darfur, pockets of higher malnutrition persist and require attention to be addressed accordingly. Although the admission rate of malnourished children increased in 2006, access to therapeutic (TFC) and supplementary feeding centers (SFC) was reduced by almost 50 percent as compared to 2005, due in part to deteriorating security and NGOs phasing out programs. The general health and nutrition of mothers with a child under five years of age improved in 2006 compared to 2005.

¶5. Overall access to potable water increased from 63 percent in 2005 to 72 percent in 2006. Sanitation levels remained stable, with almost 50 percent of the population in camps and outside camps having one traditional or improved latrine per household, according to the survey's findings.

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Agriculture and Livestock  
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¶6. The survey's results show no difference between 2005 and 2006 in the proportion of households engaged in crop production (51 percent). Survey respondents cited insecurity as the most important impediment to expanding farming, resulting in a decreased area under

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cultivation.

¶7. The number of households holding livestock remained constant, except for those holding donkeys, which increased from 47 percent to 58 percent. The proportion of IDP households with livestock increased slightly from 37 percent to 41 percent. Resident households with livestock increased from 64 percent to 75 percent.

¶8. According to the survey's findings, 54 percent of households cited lack of security - defined as theft and looting of animals - as the most severe constraint to livestock production, followed by insufficient access to pastures and migration routes as noted by 37 percent of livestock-holding households.

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Livelihoods and Food Security  
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¶9. Households' main source of income is wage labor (37 percent), followed by sale of agricultural production (20 percent) and sale of firewood (15 percent). In the survey, food security was measured based on food consumption (frequency and diversity of meal), food aid dependency, and proportion of weekly household food expenditures per capita compared with total weekly household expenditures. Seventy percent of surveyed households remain severely food insecure with dependency on food aid and high expenditures for food.

¶10. Severe food insecurity increased in West Darfur while values for households in South Darfur held constant. Severe food insecurity in North Darfur dropped to 58 percent, presumably due to a lesser dependence on food aid for resident as opposed to IDP households. The sample in North Darfur included a large proportion of residents while that of West Darfur is biased towards IDPs. The large number of IDPs living in camps in West Darfur and the much lower number of IDPs in camps in North Darfur explain this discrepancy. Overall, the level of severe household food insecurity remains high at more than 70 percent.

¶11. The characteristics of a household with high food insecurity include poor access to land, low numbers of livestock, and collection of firewood and grass as an income source. The assessment found that the major constraints to improving food security were insecurity, displacement, and the competition for income opportunities between residents and IDPs.

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Recommendations  
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¶12. Based on EFSNA's preliminary findings, USAID's Darfur Field Office makes the following recommendations:

- A) Use EFSNA's final results as a critical tool for future planning of interventions and funding decisions to sustain gains attained thus far in Darfur;
- B) Engage donor partners in exploring, expanding, and creating diverse and sustainable income generating opportunities, especially for women-headed households and youth;
- C) Engage implementing partners in further analyzing the underlying causes of malnutrition in Darfur and continue funding specifically tailored nutrition programs as priority measures using a multi-sectoral approach;
- D) Support partners, particularly the UN, in expanding assessment areas in the 2007 EFSNA mission; and
- E) Support community-based nutrition interventions in order to address malnutrition and sustain nutrition gains.

WHITAKER